

IN THE BEGINNING



Published Quarterly By
Woodson County Historical Society
Yates Center, Kansas
Vol. 7 - No. 26

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April-1974

Lester A. Harding - Editor

Editor's Notes —

Our notice about out of county subscribers including some postage if they would care to had better results than we were expecting. We certainly appreciate their co-operation.

In the January-1974 issue in the story about the Pusey Graves family we wrote, "Like so many other pioneer families there are no relatives of this family left in the county."

We should have said no one by the Graves name. We received two letters from subscribers at different towns in Nebraska informing us that there were descendents of the Graves family living in Yates Center. Of course we knew that Mrs. Francis Whitney, son Mark and daughter Dana were descendents, but we included them with the Whitney family.

In the write up about the Lewis Klick Family, evidently a complete line was omitted in the make up about the Jasper Redfearn family.

Many of our readers will recognize the picture of the original stone Christian Church on page 17 as the present Woodson County Historical Museum. This is the second oldest building in Yates Center. The old school house on West Rutledge, used as a residence is the oldest.

The subject of our cover picture can be seen in all four highway entrances to Yates Center.

Before this year is out we hope to have signs advertising the Woodson County Historical Society, located at the four highway entrances into Yates Center.

This issue has articles about the Ferdinand Spencer, George Hill, Sr., C. F. Harder families, "Hi" Nokes and the first telephone exchange, the First Christian Church, the Phelps School, an Indian camp on Turkey Creek and others.

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Woodson County Historical Society

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Yates Center, Kansas

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WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Organized March, 1965

At the regular November, 1973 meeting of the Woodson County Historical Society, held at the Woodson Hotel, there were 45 present for the dinner. Dr. Eric Conard, Dean of the Neosho County Community College of Chanute was the featured speaker. Dr. Conard spoke mostly on Geneology and the importance of keeping family history.

At the January-1974 meeting there were 54 present for the meeting. Rev. Chou T. Yoon, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Yates Center, was the speaker. Rev. Yoon spoke about and showed colored slides of his native land of Korea. Mrs. Yoon was dressed in her native custom. The evening was very interesting.

In Memoriam

Clarissa Stephenson Cantrell 78 February 17, 1974

Mrs. Cantrell was a Charter Member of the Woodson County Historical Society. She was one of the organizers and one of the first six Directors. She was Chairman of the Memorial Fund Committee, and had been an active worker in the Historical Society.

A Memorial Fund for Walter A. Bowers, started by the Yates Center Rotary Club, and helped out by the business people on the east side of the square, has grown to a nice amount. And at the present time a like Memorial Fund is being given for Clarissa Cantrell. These have been given to the Woodson County Historical Society to be used as the committee sees the need or a fitting use in honor of these people.

The membership of the Woodson County Historical Society seems to remain rather steady. Of course we lose a few and then gain a few. We are hoping to reach a high in paid up membership in 1974. There were 96 life members in 1973, with 134 regular members. We have the same number of life memberships for 1974, and 100 paid up regular members at the last of February.

Join and Support

Woodson County Historical Society

Life Membership \$25.00

Regular Membership \$2.00 a year

THE FERDINAND SPENCER FAMILY —

For many years the "Shady Mound" farm was the home of the Spencer family. This farm was located four miles north on what is now US-75 highway, and on the hill a quarter mile west. However, the beautiful grove of evergreen and forest trees were not there when the Spencers' arrived here, but were planted with the grove in mind.

Ferdinand Hayward Spencer was born May 22, 1838, in Manmouth County, New Jersey. At the age of one year he moved with his parents to Jerseyville, Illinois. Here he grew up, attended the schools of that day and worked on the farm.

Sarah Ross Parsell, was also a native of New Jersey, but came to Illinois when a girl of 14 years. In February, 1871, Ferdinand Spencer and Sarah Parsell were married at Jerseyville, Ill. They were the parents of seven children, namely-Elizabeth T., Charles Herbert, Walter Hayward, Lila S., Harry Scott, John Oliver, Sophia Isabelle. The latter two being the only ones born at "Shady Mound."

Sometime in the spring of 1879, Ferdinand Spencer came to Woodson County with the stock and furniture. He had been here before and had purchased 160 acres in the N.E. quarter of section 27-T. 24-R. 15. His brother-in-law, Thomas Herdman had come to Woodson County just previous and had a farm about two miles north of Piqua. The rest of the Spencer family came by train to Parsons and then to Neosho Falls on the "Katy" railroad. They stayed for over a year on a farm near the Herdman farm while Mr. Spencer could erect a suitable house for the family. A house was moved from Neosho Falls to the Shady Mound farm.

This first year that Mr. Spencer was here he batched in a log cabin across the road to the southeast of his farm, and broke out the native sod on his new farm.

The wedding ring worn by Sarah (Sally) Parsell, at her wedding to Ferdinand Spencer, was also worn in a wedding by her great-granddaughter, Sally Spencer Seery of Newton, just seventy-one years later.

The area along present US-75 highway from four to seven miles north of Yates Center was rather a close-knit community, with the Pleasant View School and church activities. While the Spencers' were from a long line of Presbyterians, they took an active part in many of the Pleasant View M.E. Church activities.

In 1949, Elizabeth T. Spencer wrote the story of the Spencers' and many interesting tales of the family, some of which we will quote and identify as we go along. The Editor of "In The Beginning" was much pleased when Miss Spencer called us one evening and told about writing of those memoirs, and asked where we thought a copy should

go to for a permanent record. We recommended the Kansas State Historical Society at Topeka, and we understand that is what she did. We also have a copy of that family record that was given to us by Howard Spencer.

During the 1880's and '90's, the Spencers' ran quite an hay crew, with Mr. Spencer, Walter, Scott and Oliver R., aided by Amasa Rose and son Orrin. Besides these several boys would come out from Yates Center to help out. Elizabeth wrote-"but of course they couldn't be expected to work and batch, so a little "shack with a lean-to was built and the Spencer girls with an assistant would cook for them."



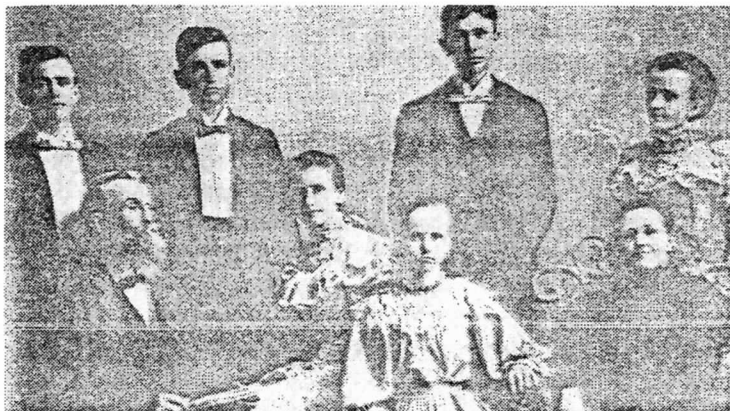
The Spencer cook shack with the lean-to. Note the wash basins and towels. Standing to the left is Miss Elizabeth Spencer. Sitting down is Mrs. E. E. Porter. The other two are not identified.

Again quoting Miss Spencer-"Our Presbyterian horses-One day when Papa was unloading hay at the tracks the team became frightened, ran through town, around the square, turned north and drew up and stopped at the hitching racks of the Presbyterian Church."

While teaching the Cope School District No. 62, Elizabeth relates-"Ned and I made the fourteen mile trip in a real early Kansas blizzard. Only two families attended school. As I passed Mr. Cope's place I rode in and he said, "No child will be sent to school in this blizzard; see Mr. Macoubrie and then go home." I rode in at Mr. Macoubrie's, "Come in and get warm and then go home. Children will

not be going to school in this blizzard." Why get warm just to get cold again so we turned around and "Ned" and I went home. "Ned" was one of the faithful horses that she wrote about. Not only did Elizabeth Spencer teach in the rural schools of Woodson County, but in the Yates Center schools before becoming County Superintendent.

THE SPENCERS of "SHADY MOUND" in THE NINETIES —



Back row: H. Scott, Walter, Oliver and Elizabeth. Front row: Ferdinand, Lila, Sophia and Mrs. Sarah Spencer.

Taking up the children of Ferdinand and Sarah Spencer: Elizabeth was the oldest and never married. We have already told some about her. She was a school teacher, county superintendent, and Sunday school worker and beloved by everybody. The writer will never forget some of the friendly advice that she gave us during the time we had started out to write about people and events.

Charles Herbert, died at the age of less than a year.

Walter Hayward was married in 1904 to Ethel May Pyke. He was well known over the county as a veterinary surgeon, besides being active in civic affairs. Their children were: Herbert Hayward, who married Vivian Greene. And Warren Vinson Spencer who married Myra Joan Lewis.

Lila Steele Spencer, married Hayes M. Coe. They took Merle Eli Ruggles into their home when he was three and a half years old and raised him as their son. Merle was married to Elsie Krueger.

Harry Scott Spencer taught in the rural schools, was principal of the Lincoln Grade School, Yates Center. Four years of county treasurer in Woodson County. He was a mail carrier on RFD No. 4, out of Yates Center for 28 years, and Superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School, Yates Center. He was married to Winifred Camac. Their children were (twins) Harold F., and Howard C., a daughter Margaret Winifred, who passed away at just over four years of age. Harold married Margaret Frances Patton. Howard married Helen Louise Mertz.

John Oliver Spencer and Daisy Dean Bruce were married in a double ceremony with Ray T. Singleton and Sophia Isabelle Spencer, May 29, 1909 at the Shady Mound farm. The children of J. Oliver and Daisy Dean Spencer were: Oliver Eugene, who married, Thelma Mae Bennallack; Mary Isabel, who married James A. Anderson; Donald Bruce, who married Gladys Opal Buller; Sarah Aileen, who married William H. Seery; Robert Louis, who married Phyllis Rose Jamison Cope; Virginia Dean.

The children of Ray T. and Sophia Isabelle Singleton were Maureen Elizabeth, who married Harold E. Livingston; and Robert Dale, who married Bernice Evelyn Roberts.

* * * * *



Picture of the complete switchboard of the Yates Center Telephone Company in 1900. There were 83 subscribers or just that number of

telephones in Yates Center at that time. Pictured at the switchboard is O. P. "Hi" Nokes, who was the operator and lineman for some time. The telephone company belonged to Mort Campbell. Nokes had started working for Campbell when he was around sixteen years old, when the poles were being set and the wire strung.

In 1900, this switchboard was open for the telephone calls from 1:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. The rest of the time was used in keeping up lines, repair and "out-of-order" phones.

It was believed that time allotted for calls was sufficient that women should not be able to talk closer to meal times as that was the time she was to feed her husband and family, which according to belief was the proper thing to do around the turn of the century.

Although Hi Nokes worked for some time at the telephone offices at Iola and Humboldt it seemed that the switchboard, telephone office and Hi Nokes all went together. When Hi first started out in the telephone work his father Philo Nokes rather opposed it as he thought the telephone was more or less a "fly by night" occupation and would soon go out of business. It was in December, 1949, just 49 years later that Hi retired from active service, although he stayed on another year till December, 1950, before quitting for good.

By this time Mort Campbell had sold the telephone business to the Emporia Telephone Co., which was really owned by W. W. Finney, who when his banking business faltered, he sold out to the Southwestern Bell Telephone Co.

The old telephone office was in a two-story frame building along the alley where the present parking lot is between the bank and the new telephone office. In 1962 a new modern telephone building was completed on the corner of State and Washington Streets with a complete self-dialing system. The day of the cheerful "Number Please"; by the local operator went out with the building of this modern building. In December, 1962, the dial system went into effect in Yates Center.

* * * * *

On December 23, 1903, O. P. "Hi" Nokes was married to Ethel May Johnson. Their children were Mildred who married Jim Willaby, and Maxine who married Leonard Steiner.

Mrs. Nokes was a native of Yates Center. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Harvey S. Johnson, who was an early day school teacher and druggist in Yates Center. At the time of her marriage she was keeping house for her father and two brothers, Les and Verne Johnson.

"Hi" Nokes was also born in Yates Center, where his parents Mr. and Mrs. Philo Nokes lived.

Both Hi Nokes and wife Ethel May, lived their entire lives in Yates Center. Nokes working mostly with the telephone duties, from waterboy for the line building crew on through the switchboard repair work.

YATES CENTER NEWS, February 21, 1896 —

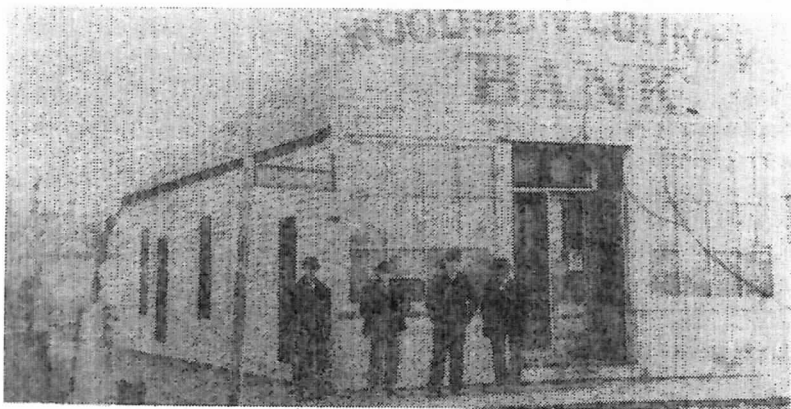
Professor Epperson had a very fair attendance at his stereopticon lecture at Vernon last Saturday evening. We are certain that he gave the good people of that place a good evening's entertainment.

BANKS OF WOODSON COUNTY —

In telling of the banks of Woodson County, we will start with the Yates Center Banks, although they were not the first in the county. Probably more will be told of the State Exchange Bank as it is the only one left in Yates Center. Down through the years there have been several banks here, and as many as three operating at one time.

What was evidently the first bank in Yates Center was the Woodson County Bank, and was opened in 1880. It was located in a one story frame building on the southwest corner of what is now State and Rutledge Streets. That has been the location where several banks have operated, and where the present bank now is.

We were told that the first bank was started by N. F. Follett. Whether Follett started in this building or not we never learned, but it was known as a private bank for awhile. It was operated by N. F. Follett, his wife and their son Hugh Follett.



The first bank building in Yates Center, less than five years after the town was mapped out as a town. We were told that this building had been moved here from Kalida.

The Woodson County Bank was nationalized in 1884, and the officers at that time were: N.F. Follett, G.D. Carpenter, J.W. Turner, R.A. Hurt, A. Lauber, T.W. Wilson and W.H. Slavens.

About two years after the bank was nationalized plans were made for the building of a new bank building. The frame building was moved a half block to the south across the alley.

Stone for the new building was quarried in one of the sandstone quarries to the north of town. It was during the summer of 1887 that the two story stone structure was built.

An article in the Yates Center News of July 22, 1887 reads: "There has been set in the front wall of the first story of the new bank building of the Woodson National Bank, a tablet of Yates Center marble, 20' by 24 inches, weighing about 700 pounds, on which is the following inscription: Woodson National Bank Established 1884.

The sculpturing was done by E. Fretz, of the firm of E. Fretz & Co., marblemen of this city and is a very neat and artistic piece of work. The block of marble was secured near the Santa Fe road east of this city and is a fine specimen of this beautiful and valuable stone!"

The above stone is now placed on the north side of the stone wall in the landscaped area to the east side of the new State Exchange Bank.

Some years later the Woodson National Bank changed to the Woodson State Bank, before it went into the hands of the receivers in 1893.

The next bank to make its appearance in the stone building on the southwest corner of the square was the Citizens State Bank, organized in May, 1897. Officials of this bank were, President, H. Waymire, who also ran a drug store and pharmacy. Vice president, J. R. DeMoss; cashier, E. A. Runyan. Around 1900 it was the only state bank in Woodson County. This bank was also discontinued in 1900.

Dickerson and Opdyke, were private bankers during the early 1880's. They sold their interests to Henry H. Winters in 1885. This became the Yates Center Bank. Winters assumed active control of this bank and operated it until 1901 when he disposed his interests. This institution then became the Yates Center National Bank. The bank was nationalized in 1902. The officers at that time were Levi Robbins, President; L. N. Beck, vice president; C. G. Ricker, vice president; J. W. Depew, cashier, W. W. Naylor, assistant cashier; M. A. Rhea, sale clerk.

By 1913 C. G. Ricker was president and W. W. Naylor. On Tuesday morning, December 2, 1913, A. C. Cutler, a national bank commissioner closed the doors of the Yates Center National Bank. Just a week before on November 28, 1913, an ad appeared in the Woodson County Advocate stating that the Yates Center National

Bank had capital, surplus, profits and stockholders liability to the amount of \$115,000. "Your deposits are guaranteed." On December 13, C. G. Ricker disappeared and was never heard from again. The shortages and liabilities were around \$175,000.

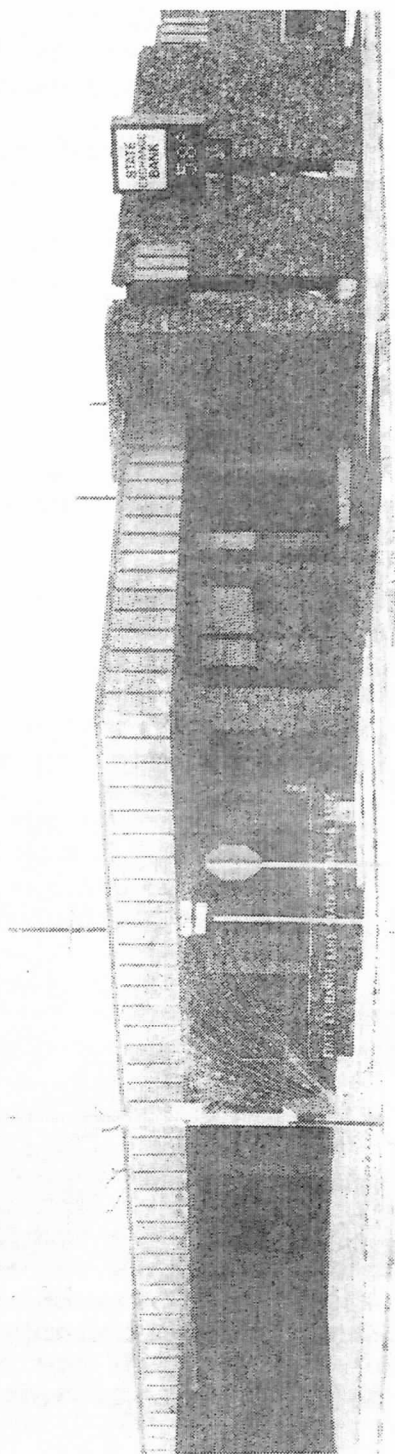
An attempt was made by the stockholders to re-organize, but this never materialized.

In November, 1900, F. L. Stephenson organized the Commercial State Bank, on the corner and in the same stone building on the corner where the State Exchange Bank has occupied. C. A. Hale was cashier for many years. Later John Gunnells was an official in this bank. This was a strong and popular bank for many years. It was a victim of the panic and depression starting in 1929. The Commercial State Bank was merged with the State Exchange Bank at that time. The president of the bank, Fred L. Stephenson sacrificed all of his personal assets for the protection of the depositors of the bank.

Another Yates Center State Bank was organized in 1914, by Andy Shannon, L. W. Knotts, Dr. Reynolds and possibly others. Later Ed Bowen was president and Thomas Davis, cashier. This bank was taken over by the State Exchange Bank around 1928. The Exchange Bank had its beginning on March 10, 1909 with J. W. Kesterson as president; H. H. McCormick, vice president; R. L. Bedford, cashier. J. W. O'Donnell was also one of the co-organizers, and a short time became the cashier. About 1918, W. L. Gunnells joined the force. For many years W. J. O'Donnell was president and W. L. Gunnells as Cashier. These two "Bill's" were a familiar pair in the banking business here. Dean Randall joined the bank force and became assistant cashier as did Edmund McDaniel. In 1950 the board of directors included John Gunnells, Clyde Hill and Elmer Light.

The location of the State Exchange Bank was originally on the northeast corner of the square where the Board of Education now is. In 1915 while at this location, the bank was robbed the first of its two times.

Two unmasked men dressed in rough clothing entered the bank, took approximately \$4700 and made their way out and along the railroad track and to the east. W. J. O'Donnell was alone in the bank at the time of the robbery, and was locked in the vault. Miss Blanche Winters came from lunch and released O'Donnell from the vault. Someone had noticed the direction the robbers had taken, and a posse was soon on the way searching for the robbers. They came upon two men who were neatly dressed, but O'Connell leveled a revolver at one of them and said that he was the one who had locked him in the vault. He recognized the robber by his eyes, as the one who had locked him in the vault.



On June 20, 1956, E.W. Oakes and son W.E. Oakes purchased the controlling interest in the State Exchange Bank. E.W. Oakes was elected as vice president in January, 1958. Later that year he became president succeeding W.L. Gunnells, who retired. W.E. Oakes joined the bank in January, 1958 as vice president, and was elected as president in 1959 when E.W. Oakes was elected as chairman of the Board of Directors. Other officers of the bank at the present time are: J.B. McCartney, vice president; R.B. Kuestersteffen, cashier; Ella Fae Henson, asst. vice president. Directors are Clyde Hill, Elmer Light and H.D. Randall.

The grand opening for this new bank was held all day Saturday, November 30, 1973.

After fleeing from the bank the two men had found their cached clothes along the track, and changed and left their old clothes and "hard" money cached. All of the cash and currency were recovered and the bandits served short terms in prison.

Two years after the State Exchange Bank had moved into the large stone bank, where they moved after merging with the Commercial State Bank, the bank was again robbed. On March 10, 1932, three men held up the bank while a fourth waited in the get-away car. Sixteen persons including employees and customers were in the bank.

All were herded into the rear room while H. Dean Randall then a bookkeeper, was forced to open the safe. John Gunnells who was handicapped, did not move as fast as they wanted him to and was struck over the head and knocked down. H. D. Randall stopped to get hold of Gunnells and pulled him into the vault. The employees and four customers were ushered into the vault, which later was opened from the inside. Meanwhile the robbers made their get-away with more than \$6,000. The robbers were never apprehended, but the loss was insured. W. J. O'Donnell and H. D. Randall were called to Kansas City to identify some suspects, but nothing could be proven. (More about Woodson County Banks next issue.)

* * * * *

PHELPS SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 50 —

While known as the Phelps School to most people in later years, it had its beginning in another location and was known as the Baldwin School.

Around 1870 a frame school house was built in the corner along what is now US-75, nine and a quarter miles north of Yates Center, along the west side of the road, where the road goes west to the Arthur Stockebrand farm. At the time of the school's building it was known as the James Baldwin Ranch.

The Henry Trueblood family lived about a half mile south of this school house when built. Quite a few years ago Richard Trueblood, then editor of the Yates Center News told of going to this school in fall of 1872. He and his brothers, Will and Charles and James Ward were among the pupils going at that time. James Ward was the father of our ex-sheriff Donald Ward. Trueblood also told that there were as high as 50 pupils attending that school at that time.

Chris Phelps came to that vicinity around 1980 and purchased some land in north of section 35, Twp. 23, R. 15, nine miles north of Yates Center. Like other school districts of the period with the prairie land being settled the center of a school district would shift with the population. An attempt was made to move the school house to the

east. People along that part of Turkey Creek and lower Duck Creek naturally opposed the move. The story is told that the school house was moved during one night by the people from the east part of the district to the location on the Phelps land.

We did not learn just when this move took place, but was evidently around 1900 or perhaps some before. From that time on it was known as the Phelps School. Around 1913 a new and smaller school house was built.

We have no names of teachers during the first ten years of Dist. No. 50, but from 1881, we have the following teachers: B. F. Hutchinson, Mary Stines, Mrs. Mary Stines Miller, Clinnie Allen, M. P. Dutro, Maga Leffingwell, Minnie Harris, Cynthia Hawkins, Celia Manifold, Ivy Crist, Maggie Ward, Emma Gregory, Dollie Mantzar, G. S. McCartney, Bessie Miller, Arthur Miller, Mrs. Laura Surber, Walter Bales, Myrta Hutchins, Agnes Knapp, Lila Beam, Cora Blakely, Mrs. Lula Ricketts, Josie Guy, Grace Etter, Roy V. Green, Elsie Culver, Elsie Newell, Lola Jarrett, Laura McLaughlin, Hazel Mentzer, Mrs. Lena Briles, Olive Richards, Gladys Neighberger, Lillian Pickering, Vesta Danielson, Etta Sutherland, Clara Watkins, Millie Thomas, Lorene Shepard, Clara Watkins, 1938; Mrs. Letha Stockebrand, 1942-43; Mabel Bushfield, Lorene Shepard Rork. Maxine Hamm was the last teacher at Dist. No. 50, in 1946-47. The school was then consolidated with Dutro District No. 54.



The Phelps School winter term 1912-13. Back row right to left, Loyd McDaniels, Henry Smith, Willard Brown, Elsie Newell, teacher; Lula Briles-Cope, Marie Chardier. Front row: Edward Chardier, Ralph Leonard, Hazel Ricketts-Yoho, Myrtle Smith, Clara Watkins-King.

THE GEORGE HILL FAMILY —

In the spring of 1869, a covered wagon with George Hill, Sr. and wife arrived in Woodson County, coming from Topeka. Their first night in this county was spent where they camped on a large space of bare sandstone, just across the road east from the Belmont Cemetery.

George Hill, Sr. was born at Norfolk, England in May, 1843. When a lad of about eleven years he came across the ocean with his parents, John and Sarah Cooper Hill. The family going to Dane County, Wisconsin, where they made their home for many years. At the outbreak of the Civil War, George enlisted in Co. G, Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. This regiment formed a part of the famous "Iron Brigade."

We would like to make a comparison here to the story of Col. Wm. Parsons, whose story appeared in the January, 1974 issue, No. 26. Parsons was in Co. F in the same regiment. In the First Battle of Bull Run, Hill was wounded and was absent from his regiment for about seven months. Both men marched with their regiment to Gettysberg, and both men were wounded in that great battle. At the Battle of the Wilderness Parson was seriously wounded, and left on the battle field as dead. Hill presumed Parsons dead until they were brought together in Woodson County around 1872. Hill had been discharged with his regiment in 1864, while Parsons had been picked up by the enemy and sent to a Confederate hospital and later to be a Confederate prison.

After being discharged from the army, Hill returned to his home in Wisconsin. In 1867, he moved to Topeka, Kansas.

Coming to this part of Kansas, George Hill crossed Woodson County, and settled in edge of Wilson County, about a half mile east of the Little Sandy Cemetery. Here they started their pioneer life in a small log cabin. And in this cabin a short time later Mrs. Hill passed away at child birth.

On June 9, 1872, George Hill was married to Miss Lucinda Rhodes in Wilson County. Lucinda was born in Illinois. In 1870, in company with her two brothers joined a wagon caravan, headed for Woodson County, Kansas. Lucinda about 16 old drove one of the teams the full distance stopping at Neosho Falls, where they lived for awhile. While at Neosho Falls Lucinda worked at the home of Col. Parsons.

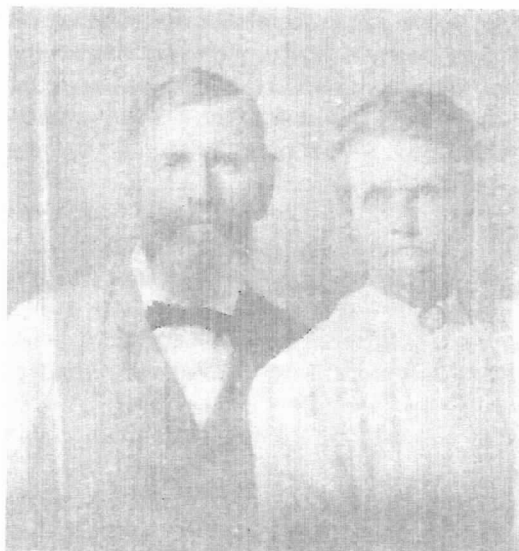
Lucinda Rhodes had a sister living in the Little Sandy community, and would come there for an occasional visit. Sometime around 1870-71, as Lucinda was visiting in the Little Sandy vicinity, she became acquainted with a young fellow that was building the West Buffalo School house. That man happened to be George Hill.

George and Lucinda Hill were the parents of five children, namely Sadie, John, Bessie, Ina and George.

Living about a mile south of the much talked about Silver City, Mr. Hill lived through the stampede that came as a result of the gold and silver rush that came to Silver City. Around 1883-84, George Hill purchased the farm where a part of Silver City was located, and moved with his family into Belmont township, Woodson County. In later years the Hill farm was added to and is still in possession of his son George Hill.

Sometime during 1884, some of the children of the Hill family took sick and it was necessary to give medicine at exact times. The Hill's had no clock or time piece to tell this time by so Mr. Hill went to town and purchased a Seth Thomas clock. This clock is still in possession of the junior George Hill, and it is also still running in good order.

In 1901, a typhoid fever epidemic hit the Hill family and Bessie who had married Lance Silas and her younger sister Ina succumbed to the disease. The junior George was seriously sick with the fever, but pulled through.



Picture of George and Lucinda Hill

We will tell about the Hill children, Sadie (Mrs.) Stanford Eagle and George Hill Jr. in a later issue.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - YATES CENTER —

The first Christian Church of Yates Center was organized April 11, 1877, in the stone school house on 303 W. Rutledge, under the leadership of Rev. J. G. Brown.

The charter members were Daniel Powell and wife, H. F. Naylor and wife, H. J. Gregory and wife, J. C. Powell and wife, W. F. Gardner and wife, M. Parrish and wife, Jesse Pickett and wife. Pickett was listed as an attorney and ordained minister and evangelist.

It has been told that Pickett had been one of the leaders of a group of this denomination while living at Kalida and continued after moving to Yates Center.

Daniel Powell and M. Parrish were the first elders and J. C. "Joe" Powell and H. F. Naylor were the first deacons.

Among other early members of this congregation were the Rheas, Nichols, and Radshaws.

The greatest achievement at this time was when the congregation made plans to build a new stone church. The lot for the building was given the church by Abner Yates. In the fall of 1877, this group began the erection of the native stone building on West Mary Street. The stones were mostly quarried from the stone quarry to the north of Yates Center, while some seasoned stones were picked up on the prairie. The stones were all quarried and hauled by donated labor. Most of the lumber the first year was brought from the Big Sandy area by the brethren who lived along that creek.

Two hundred dollars were raised to pay the stone masons and buy lime for mortar.

The first year the stone walls were put up and rafters placed to hold the gables from falling. Work was then stopped until early the next year. The roof was then put on, the floor laid, doors and windows put in.

In September, 1878, the State Convention of the Christian Church was held here with the church in that unfinished condition. About twenty members in the state along with the local congregation attended this convention. Boards were borrowed and erected as seats.

John Shively of Paola and C. G. Wright of Coyville were the first ministers coming here. Rev. Wright conducted the first revival meetings here with this congregation. Thirty-three were added to the church roll from February 19 to 29 in 1878.

Following the State Convention in September, 1878, the congregation held services in the unfinished church until cold

weather, and then went back to the stone school house on West Rutledge.

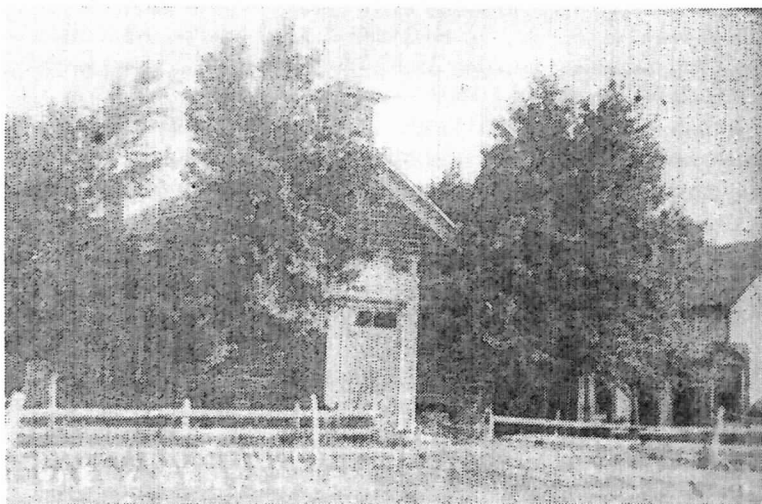
The next year, 1879, C. W. Pool was pastor. He was also a carpenter, and soon begin doing the finishing work on the inside of the church. As fast as money could be raised for material he finished the woodwork, made benches, the inside was then plastered and made ready for services the year round.

About 1880, a parsonage was built to the west side of the stone church. This church and parsonage was used till the new and present Christian Church was built.

In the later 1880's, people from the Big Sandy vicinity came to the Yates Center church. These included such families as the Thoroughmans', Dewitts', Pearsolls', and Millsons'. Also about that time G. H. Lamb and family came from Toronto.

And with increased financial conditions under the leadership of the Lambs', Freemans', Whittakers', Hursts', Gregorys', Wests', Jarretts', Millsons', Thoroughmans', Mentzers', Mortons', Rheas', Wells', Cramers', Babcock, Muenders', Dyserts' and others, plan for a new church in a different location was worked out.

The cornerstone for the new church building on the corner of Main and Washington was laid sometime in 1904. G. H. Lamb placed a Bible and other valuable papers in the cornerstone.



The old stone church with the original doors in front and a cupalo on top was used by this congregation from 1878 until 1904. The parsonage is also shown as well as a board fence and hitching rack in front.

Much of the foregoing information was obtained from "A Brief History of the First Christian Church," by Mrs. Mollie Chellis Cramer and her sister Mrs. Fannie Chellis Shurtleff, in 1970. Their recollections were from 1888, until 1970, including of the building of the new church, and the educational building, that was dedicated July 10, 1966.

We do not have a complete list nor in order of service of the pastors serving this church, but will give as we have them. Those already mentioned are, J.G. Brown, John Shively, G.G. Wright, C.W. Pool, J.J. Williams, Gabbert, McQuerry. About this time some of the pastorates were short, and sometimes months and years between. At such times, J.E. Pickett, one of the organizers and an ordained minister, would preach and keep the church alive. He received no salary nor compensation for his labors, except the joy of serving his church and God. Other preachers though possibly not in order before 1904 are: Cootingham, Dick Woodside, Wm. Woodside, White, McDonald, Young, Russell, Adams, Yard, Morris, Herbert, J. Scrivener. Beginning in 1903 were: J.G. Slick, F.W. Emerson, C.E. Wagner, M. Moore, Alva Lee Ragsdale, W.F. Kohl, L.L. Roberts, Miles Brownrigg, L.L. Roach, C.O. Banta, E.K. Latimer, Gerard S. Taylor, John W. Tyndall, Jr., H.T. Brown, Paul Gary, R.C. Harding, R.L. Cecil, D.E. Donaldson, R.N. Towry, M.C. Cook, Ellis James Votau, C.M. Foust, Carl Pachard, William R. Reed, and the present pastor, Dan M. Pennie.

YATES CENTER NEWS - 1897 —

Football game between Yates Center and Neosho Falls. Yates Center won, 4 to 0. Yates Center got one touchdown, (4 points). Players on the Yates Center team: John Hurt, center; Art Fullington, RG; Charles Stitche, LG; John Shurtleff, RT; Joe Marple, LT; Charles Craig, RE; Claude Knight, LE; Art Wright, QB; Charles Silvia, RB; Henry Stitche, LB; Ralph Rankin, FB.

Players on the Neosho Falls team were: Luther Harold, center; S. Parsons, RG; C. Harbargin, LG; E. Grubbs, RT; Jasper Best, LT; Joe Morre, RE; W. Finney, LE; L. McGinnis, QB; W. Beardon, RB; R. Heron, LB; E.C. Parker, FB.

Walter Agnews team of black horses broke loose from the hitching post at G.R. Stephensons' last Saturday evening and made a 2:40 dash down the street east. Just below the J.W. Depew home on E. Rutledge. They came in contact with a tree and smashed the buggy up pretty good. The team was not hurt.

May-1897 — John and Dovie Williams of Finney gave an ice cream party at the residence of their parents in honor of Misses May Camac and Flora Trueblood who were visiting there.

Mrs. Ernest Stockebrand was thrown out of her buggy on the way home from Turkey Creek last Sunday and had her collarbone broken.

CHARLES H. HARDER AND FAMILY —

One of the early day settlers along Owl Creek was Charles H. Harder. He was born in the village of Jagzaw, Kreis, Anklin, Germany. His father was also named Charles H. He acquired a good education in the schools in Germany, and at the age of 20, started out on his own.

He decided that America was the land of opportunity for young people to start out and booked passage for America in 1864. He located first in Livingston County, Illinois, and coming on to Woodson County arriving here in February, 1868. He worked first as a farm hand and then took up a homestead.

In September, 1869, Charles H. Harder was married to Mrs. Theresa Stockebrand, who was the widow of August Stockebrand, who died about 1867. Theresa was a daughter of Marquis Brockman, who resided at the city of Kiel, Germany. By her first marriage she had five children, August, Mary, Henry, Annie and Emil Stockebrand.

At their marriage they lived on her farm (Durand is now on the east side of this farm). Five children were also born to Charles and Theresa Harder-Augusta, Martha, Franz, or Frank, Lizzie and Pauline. These we will take up later.

When the Zion Evangelical Church was organized in the home of August Lauber in 1868, Charles H. Harder was chosen as the class leader. He was known as a local preacher, but received his licence to preach during the 25th annual Evangelical Conference held at Yates Center, in March, 1889. Rev. Harder made frequent trips to Orlando, in the Indian Territory of Oklahoma and preached in German to a group of German homesteaders who had come to that area in 1889 and 1890. Rev. Harder made these trips from Yates Center to Orlando by horseback giving him the title of a circuit rider.

Rev. Charles H. Harder, also had a brother Ferdinand Harder who was an ordained minister in the Evangelical Conference.

We will take up the families of the two sets of children in this family. The Stockebrand as well as the Harder were all born on the farm near where Durand railway station now is.

August Stockebrand married Alice Linder, a daughter of Ernest

Linder. Their children were: Aaron, who married Effie Hoggatt; Edward, who married Grace Lamb; Edna, who married Ray Drake; Frances, who married Palmer Welspiel; and Russell, who married Alice Gordon.

Mary, who was married to Louis Brodman. Their children were Lillie, who never married; Thomas who married Emma Bulk and Theodore F., who married Goldie Williams.

Henry, married Mathilda Frevert, a daughter of Frederick Frevert. Their children were: Clarence, who married Ingrid ----; Ira, who married Bonnie Rainey and Minnie who never married. Annie Stockebrand, became the wife of John C. Donnerberg. Their children were: Elma (Bellard); Pearl (Reynolds), and Iva (Powers).

Emil, who married Martha (Mattie) Frevert. Their children were: Esther, who married Leonard Boursfeld; Robert married Vivian Stitche; Dorothy married James Beckett; Wilbur, who married Irma Eagle Bresner; Myra, married ---- McIntyre. Bertha married ---- Kerns, and Lauren, who married Barbara Schooling.

The Herder children and who they married. Augusta married William Lauber. Their children were: Emil who married Eva Woods; and Wilfred, who married Katherine Rockwell.

Martha married Henry Krueger. They had one daughter Emma who never married.

Frank F. married Elizabeth Geisert. They had five sons, Carl F. who married Erma Willis; Herbert, married NaJane Azbill; and Wilbur, who married Dorothy Lee. Two sons Russell and Louis, both dying in infancy.

Lizzy Harder never married.

Pauline Theresa married William G. Toedman, son of Adolph Toedman. Their children were: Ruth who married Kelly Ginger, and Willard Toedman.



Rev. C. H. Harder and wife Theresa

AN INDIAN VILLAGE —

Turkey Creek like all other good-sized streams in this part of Kansas had many Indian camp sites along both banks. These camp sites could be found around a quarter mile apart where ever a well drained knoll would be close to the creek for water and fuel. There were mostly all used over a period of years by hunting parties of Indians.

However the Indian village, if it could be called a village, that we were told about, was of a short duration. It was during the trying days of the Civil War, around 1863 or 1864. This band of Indians were sent here by the U.S. Government as a protection for the early settlers from anticipated raids from other tribes or raiding bands of Indians chiefly from tribes in the Indian Territory to the south. Many of those Indians belonged to the Southern Confederency.

One time we were told that this band were of the Kickapoo tribe, another that they were Osages. Some evidence shows that they were of the latter tribe. This group was camped for a period of about six weeks on a sloping area of about three acres along the north side of Turkey Creek on land belonging to Joseph Miller, who with his large family lived about a half mile to the southeast. The late Mrs. Eliza (Miller) Campbell who was a small girl at the time told the majority of this story to the writer (and editor).

The scene of this camp was on land now belonging to Donald Edwards. There were around 600 warriors in this village, around 1000 men, women and children. Because of this number and the fact that flint and other artifacts have been found evidently some of this group were camped on both side of the creek.

The burial ground (the old Indian cemetery) was across a small creek about 200 yards west of the main camp. They came here in the fall of the year. While this band evidently drew a good supply of rations from the government it would look like a tremendous task to forage for enough food for 1000 people along upper Turkey Creek. There were five of the band that died during the short stay here. The burial place along a high knoll over looking the north bank of Turkey Creek was evidently used by other bands as they would travel and hunt through here and camp along the creek.

What a scene this must have been in this camp with perhaps 100 to 150 teepees or wigwams grouped together here along Turkey Creek. They were a rather poor tribe with few possessions. On one occassion a small Indian boy was badly injured by being kicked by a horse. Upon hearing about the little boy Mrs. Joseph Miller took some fresh milk, and went to the camp and helped care for him.

Some traders stopped at the Joseph Miller home one evening. (Their house was about a hundred yards from the LeRoy-Eureka wagon trail). While the traders were in the Miller house the lariat ropes were stolen from their saddles. The next day Mr. Miller went to the Indian camp and told the Chief what had happened. The Chief replied that he allowed no stealing from settlers by any of his tribe. The ropes were promptly returned.

Wm. B. Stines, who had built a log cabin less than a quarter mile southwest from this camp had a small stove stolen from his cabin while he was away. Flour and molasses was scattered around the small log cabin. The burial place mentioned was on the Stines homestead, that later was known as the Holmquest farm.

During their stay here several of the Indian braves made two foraging trips into the Indian Territory of Oklahoma. The purpose was to steal horses and ponies from the Indians living there. Joseph was invited to make one of these trips with them, but he was told that he could not eat anything on the trip. The reason was that if one was shot the wounds would not hurt so much and would heal quicker.

A "Squaw Man"—a white man that married an Indian woman and took up the Indian life lived with this band. When asked why he ever took up this kind of living he replied that he liked that kind of a life and had a squaw to do all of his work, "What more could a man want!"

While camped along Turkey Creek one of the Chieftains, perhaps the head Chief died. We did not learn the name of the Chief so for lack of a better name we will call him Big Chief. he was seemingly not a very old, and was a good-sized man. He was wearing buckskin clothes, and on his fingers were rings, on his toes were small tinkling bells. He wore a copper headband about an inch wide. A small three legged iron kettle was placed in the grave with him along with beads, some flint arrow heads, and other trinkets.

We will imagine the event as Big Chief was prepared for burial. As several braves placed him on a litter, carried it on their shoulders from the camp, across the small creek and up a steep incline to the burial place. He was placed in a shallow grave just a few feet from the high bank of Turkey Creek. he was placed in the grave facing the setting sun with a small plain sandstone marking the grave.

In a way we think it's a shame that graves such as this are molested, for it is mostly for the white man's curiosity. This burial ground has been a part of a field, and has been plowed and cultivated for many years. We watched the opening of a small child's grave here. It had been placed in a shallow grave, and covered over with a flat limestone rock and then covered with dirt.

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